An Essay On

Semiology

Respectfully Submitted to the

Faculty of the

Homœopathic Medical College

of

Pennsylvania

On the 31st day of January

Eighteen hundred & fifty four

By

L. Marcus Gratt

New York

In respectfully submitting my views upon a subject connected with the study and practice of medicine, shall endeavor to avoid the error of advocating a theory, having no claims to science, and opposed in practice to every known law in nature. I do not expect to enlighten the profession by any views I may advance upon a subject that has engaged the minds of those whose names are illustrious as benefactors of their race, and who are justly entitled to the laurels won by their efforts to advance the cause of science and settle upon a firm basis, the only true and rational law of cure, "Similia Similibus Curantur".

The subject of Semiology is variously estimated among Homeopaths: and Pathologically considered, do not attach that importance to disease as affecting the different organs and tissues of the body,

and the treatment of Symptoms upon Pathological principles.

The idea maintains to some extent that a knowledge of Anatomy and Physiology is not important in the investigation of diseases Homeopathicly, or that the application of pathological science in diagnosing diseases, from Symptoms and physical signs, is not requisite to arrive at a proper conclusion, or has any weight in selecting a remedy Homeopathic to the Symptoms.

In discussing the subject of Semiology We shall endeavor to sustain the position that Symptoms of disease cannot be well understood, or their treatment successfully met by the law of cure, "Similes" unless We take into consideration the indications arising from physical signs, and vital Symptoms.

"Disease like every suffering to which humanity is subject, is natures warning revelation, her benignant penalty of violated law."

When we consider how many agents by which we are surrounded, that in themselves contribute to develop the nature which we possess, Mental, Moral and Physical, and if properly appropriated, and the laws which govern them sufficiently understood, we might escape many time the infliction of that rod which is sure to fall, sooner or later upon all who violate the laws of life and health.

As the study and practice of the healing art demands that we should become familiar with the phenomena of health as well as disease; a thorough knowledge of the influences which govern both, is indispensably requisite in order that we may be able to

protect the one, and call to our aid remedial agents adapted in their operation, favourably to relieve the other.

Being well convinced as we are of the truth of the law of Similia Similibus Curantur, are satisfied with the proof upon which it is based, viz. that Medicines cure diseases whose Symptoms resemble, not only in character but in kind, the Symptoms which such medicines produce in the healthy body.

The "Modus Operandi" of medicinal agents on the organism may be somewhat inexplicable: but we are not left to conjecture in regard to their results, when Symptoms correspond with the remedy, or vice versa.

While the Homœopath includes in his investigation of disease, the various causes Mental, Moral, and Physical, as well

as the morbid indications resulting from general and local disturbances, the Empiric contents himself with Theories, Hypothesis and Abstractions, which from time to time give place to other systems of therapeutics based upon a more quick and immediate than those previously abandoned.

There is no branch of the healing art so intimately connected with a successful and intelligent examination of Symptoms as a Knowledge of Anatomy and Physiology.

Without it, a man who attempts to practice medicine, is a Quack and fool, although he may be as wise as Solomon in other matters, he is not qualified to discharge the responsible duties of a Physician.

Semiology treats of the signs of disease, and these signs or Symptoms may be recog-

nised as affecting the physical properties of the body, or as Vital Symptoms resulting as a phenomena of diseased action in the various functions.

Symptoms arising from physical disturbances, are obvious to our senses from a knowledge of physical laws.

In diagnosing disease from Symptoms, the correctness will very much depend upon observation and experience, based upon a correct standard of health: a departure from which would be symptomatic of disease.

Symptoms are the expressions and unwritten language of disease. In the language of Hahnemann, "We can discover nothing to remove in disease in order to change it into health, except the ensemble of the Symptoms. remove them, and the disease is annihilated.

What else is the Physician called upon to treat, unless Symptoms of some kind exhibit themselves?

Having endeavored to show the advantages arising from a knowledge of the human system, and the importance to the Physician of a correct estimate and appreciation of the laws which govern the phenomena of disease: We will next proceed to make some suggestions in relation to the study of Symptoms, for the removal of which, the Homeopathic practice primarily directs all her recourse as the most natural, immediate, and rational system of therapeutics.

Were we to inquire, what the Homeopathic Physician, by reason of his fidelity to the principles, and practice of medicine, based

upon the law of Cure revealed to Hahne mann, of "Similia". And for which humanity owe him a lasting debt of gratitude; have been considered by the appelation of Symptom Doctors, not prescribing for disease, but mearly for the Signs and phenomena. Admiting this to be the case; We contend that Every disease curable is made known to the Physician by its Symptoms; and when they are removed he has Cured the Entire disease.

This Doctrine is the great and important duty of the Physician, who is impressed with the responsibility of his Calling, which is to relive the sick in the most gentle and prompt manner, by assisting nature in her efforts, not opposing her.

Symptoms may be designated under

three heads, or divisions, Diagnostic — Prognostic and Therapeutic. Diagnostic Symptoms are derived from Semiology and is the result of Clinical experience and observation. They have a special application in distinguishing one disease from another, and have an intimate relation to the phenomena, and nature of the disease.

In the Study of Semiology, a correct knowledge of the functional apparatus and the various offices they perform in the Animal economy in a state of health; such as respiration, Circulation, digestion, and excretion, will enable one to decide upon, and distinguish the signs of disease from those of health.

Symptoms of disease arising from

internal derangment of the organs, are studied through Physical Signs.
Allowing the fact that to a great extent the Homœpathic law of Cure ignores the value of these indications, as not important in the treatment of Symptoms: I hold that the entire phenomena of disease action should be taken into the account, that we may, if nothing more, be able to diagnose correctly the case, and be prepared to give our patient a history of his real condition also, furnish ourselves with a sufficient data to form which to make a rational Prognosis.
I do not wish to be understood here as advocating a theory of Practice based upon supposed or actual Causes of disease, or that it Can be successfully treated by

expelling from the body a morbific agent, by the use of mixed remedies; the action of which when introduced into the Stomach having no affinity for each other, often incompatible substances, creating factitious diseases, and dregg symptoms "secundum artem", to the great disappointment of the Physicians, if not thereby sacrificing the life of his patient.

Under the head of Physical Signs, we may discover an important symptom, and many times possess ourselves of a key by which we are admitted into the secret springs of life. viz Physiognomy.

On entering the chamber of the sick, our Eye for the first time falls upon the patient, we seldom fail to recognize, if our attention has been properly directed to

the subject, and we have acquired the habit of discriminating, with ordinary perceptive faculties, of discovering at a glance any peculiarities in the physiognomy of the patient; as well as in the position and movements of the body, whether lying, sitting, or standing

Another valuable suggestion, and it may not be out of place to refer to it in this connection, from the Chair of Materia Medica, - that when called to see a patient, and we find them asleep, care should be taken, not to arouse them until we have noticed particularly the appearance, position, respirations, - whether hurried or otherwise, and any deviations from a standard of health. Many valuable

Symptoms may be gathered, from which he may make a diagnosis of the case, that otherwise might elude our notice, when the patient was awake.

In the investigation of Symptoms, with the view of Diagnosing Prognosing and Therapeutics, We find they all hinge upon therapeutic Symptoms, which are considered most important in the treatment of diseases Homeopathicly

However much we may be influenced by Collateral sciences in the study of Symptoms, and by them are aided in discerning the Causes of disease, they afford comparatively little assistance in selecting a remedy to meet the indications.

Notwithstanding, in examining Symptoms we should not fail to call to our aid, the

light that scince has shed, in revealing the mysterious and wonderfull arrangment of the mechanism of the human body in her beautiful adaptation for performing their several functions.

"Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology, lie at the foundation of a thorough Medical Education."

In the demonstration of Anatomy, we see unfolded the structure and mechanism of the human body. The scince of Physiology explains the phenomena taking place in the body in accordance with physical laws. While Pathology, the connecting link discovers the abnormal condition of the functions, from which arise the various symptoms of disease.

The study of the symptoms and phenomena

of disease, complicated as it is, and diversified infinitely more evanescent than the changes in the natural economy, will require far closer observation, when we take into the account the various influences that affect animal life, and produce different phenomena independant of the violation of the laws of health on the part of the individual.

In order properly to understand the relation that exists between Cause and effect and be able to appreciate the results arising from predisposing and exciting causes, we must take into account a wide range of circumstances that have operated in developing and producing disease - such as the habits of the patient, predisposition - idiosyncrasy, and every contingency

by which disease has been excited.

Intimately connected with the Study of Symptoms, Etiology and Nosology sustain a close relationship, and require a careful attention. From a study of Etiology in connection with Symptoms, we derive a knowledge of the seat and cause of disease, calling to our aid physical signs derived from a valuable source, viz Auscultation & Percussion.

The classification of Symptoms may be arranged under Symptomatic Nosology, by which the true nature of disease is defined, assisting very materially our investigations for the totality of the Symptoms, which is the essence of disease, and for this removal, all our skill, with mature judgment must be brought to bear. To the Homœopathist, Semeiology possesses a peculiar interest, and

demands a thorough knowledge. His success will very much depend upon the amount of labor bestowed in becoming familiar with the endless changes constantly taking place in the diseased body. Although these changes may be slight, and the symptoms arising may seem unimportant; still they often have a controlling influence in selecting the proper remedy to meet their indications.

To the Student, Symptoms studied abstractly or in connection with the materia Medica, seem dull and perplexing; but when considered as the result of a cause, they the effect, an importance attaches to them, which can be estimated only by the consciousness and gratification of being able to controll them by administering remedies in accordance with natures own law of cure, "Similia Similibus Curantur."